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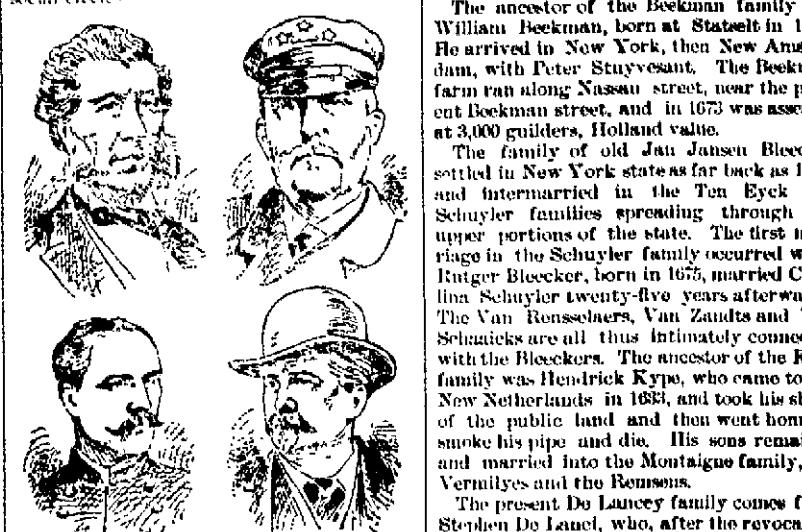
INTERESTING GOSSIP ABOUT WARD McALLISTER AND THE 400.

"Upon What Meets Both This Our Case" "The. Something About the Ascent of the Executive Society People of New York—McAllister's Personality."

Special Correspondence

New York, April 15.—The endless amount of talk which the squabbles between the New York legislature and what is known as the Four Hundred of New York City over the extension of the great centennial celebration has created shows no sign of abating, and Ward McAllister, by reason of his occupancy of the post of social leader of the metropolis of the United States, is made the subject of innumerable philippics and apophoretics, many of which are characterized by a total lack of common sense.

Of the antecedents of this social major general the information is exceedingly meager, his portrait is even more scarce. He was born in Georgia, and is connected with several of the oldest families in the state, including the Vanderbils of the south and some of the best-known people of the name in the north. He is not a man, however, who makes a boast of his ancestry, although it dates back to revolutionary times, and is singularly reticent with reference to his long influence in social circles.



WARD McALLISTER. SOME OF THE FOUR HUNDRED.

There is a place known in the war histories as Genesis Point, situated a few miles from Savannah on the Ogeechee river, and here at the beginning of the war was created Fort McAllister, on the extreme sea front of the immense rice plantations owned by the family from which the fort takes its name. Col. Joseph McAllister, the owner of one of these, was at the head of an independent organization of local scouts, numbering 120 men, which for more than a year he supported at his own expense. Fort McAllister is famous for the number of its fights with Federal gunboats, but more especially as the first spot reached and captured on the sea-board by Sherman's army in its march through Georgia. Tradition does not say that Mr. Ward McAllister participated in the struggle around the old homestead. That makes little difference at the present time, however, especially in the social planetary system of which he is a central sun.

In person, this much discussed gentleman does not resemble one of his peculiar calling. He weighs about 230 pounds, is in the neighborhood of five feet ten inches in height and apparently between 55 and 60 years old. As an Irishman said: "He is barefoot on the top of his head," but the balance is made up by a pair of legs of brown and slightly curly hair. His features are regular, indicative of force and ability, and with the exception of a strong mustache and imperial slightly tinged with gray, he is clean shaven. One can see at a glance that he is a thoroughbred—a gentleman from crown to sole, and it is the testimony of those who know him well that he is a charming fellow. When off duty he dresses plainly, and would attract no more attention than any sturdy business man. In the uniform, however, he is a different matter, and in the hands of the bright conversationalists of the occasion, his good sense and unobtrusiveness are shown by the dignified manner he has maintained throughout the volleys of criticism of which he has been the target. It is something for a man under such temptation to keep out of print.

The profession of Mr. McAllister is that of a lawyer, he having been admitted to the bar in California in 1851; but possessing an ample income, both by inheritance and marriage, he preferred the life of social ease which his wealth entitles him to, and does not shrink the responsibilities imposed upon him as a social leader.

Before the war, when Newport was the resort of aristocratic and wealthy southerners, Mr. McAllister was prominent in all the entertainments of that city, and he yet maintains a summer establishment there. Public gossip first associated his name with the crime of the circus when it was known a few years ago that Mrs. Astor selected him to send out the invitations to the Patriarchs' ball of that season. It made a decided stir in society for a time, but the task was so satisfactorily performed that he has since remained an unquestioned authority on all matters pertaining to affairs of this kind in which the exclusives desire to know "who's who."

It was explained that the Patriarchs' balls being under the patronage of only fifty subscribers, each one of whom has to be invited by the first gentleman and fair ladies, it was desirable to prevent confusion by assigning the management to a single individual. In other words, the list being sent to Mr. McAllister, his first duty is to compare notes and observe that not more than one invitation is sent to the person indicated. If he discovers such duplication, he notifies the senders and the error is rectified. Next, he proceeds to arrange for the ball, decorations, supper, flowers and favors, and finally settles the bills, thus relieving the lesser managers from a vast amount of troublesome detail. In the event of a more general affair, he is intrusted with the task of preventing the presence of people with shady reputations and others who are not wanted, and there are usually a lot of these, especially among women, anxious to obtrude themselves upon good society. It will be seen that the position is one of responsibility requiring the exercise of tact and business qualities.

So far as these semi-professional duties are concerned the majority of persons have come to realize that it is a good thing to have an inveterate and discreet man of the world who is entrusted with such matters to take general control of a select affair, and if he did not look for the speech ascribed to Mr. McAllister that "there are only four hundred persons in New York who belong to good society," he would not have been subjected to ridicule and prejudices would not have been aroused by his appointment as the manager of the Centennial ball. It is only just to add that a well informed club man

referring to the matter, recently remarked that what Mr. McAllister really did was in answer to question as to "how many persons could be counted upon to go to a ball?" His reply was "about four hundred."

One of the results of this curious controversy is that almost everybody is just now asking the question, "Who are the 400?" and the answer is being sought in the most curious manner, especially among the social standard. Very often there is plenty of wealth without much pedigree, and then the owner buys his family crest in some shop. Until fifty years ago the majority of our ancestors were comparatively poor; that is, they would be counted poor today and not be entitled to a place among the Four Hundred. Here is some interesting information concerning our forefathers, gleaned from old records.

The ancestor of the Beckman family was William Beckman, born at Stateville in 1623. He arrived in New York, then New Amsterdam, with Peter Stuyvesant. The Beckman farm ran along Nassau street, near the present Beckman street, and in 1673 was assessed at 2,300 guilders, Holland value.

The family of old Jan Jansen Bleeker settled in New York state for lack in 1640, and intermarried in the Ten Eyck and Schuyler families, spreading through the middle portions of the state. The first marriage in the Schuyler family occurred when Rutgers Bleeker, born in 1675, married Catharine Schuyler twenty-five years afterwards. The Van Rensselaers, Van Zandts and Van Schaicks are all thus intimately connected with the Bleekers. The ancestor of the Klipp family was Hendrick Kyppe, who came to the New Netherlands in 1684, and took his share of the public land and then went home to smoke his pipe, and die. His sons remained and married into the Montaigne family, the Vermilles and the Rensselaers.

The present De Lancy family comes from Stephen De Lancy, who, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, fled from his country, arriving in the harbor of New York in 1685.

The Livingston family are remotely descended from Livingston, a Hungarian nobleman who went to Scotland about 1663. The direct descendant is Dr. John Livingston. Robert, his son, was a government official who arrived here in 1670. With this family are associated and marrying the Van Rensselaers, the Forsters, Crayfords, Brockholts, Hoffmans, Beckmans, Van Schaicks and Ten Broecks.

The Osgood family is of English origin and the first of the line emigrated about the year 1625. The Genests, Fields and Hookers are connected with the Osgoods.

The Barclays roach back to Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, while the Rutherfords "graze their one letter" by being in possession of lands and ladies that connect them with every body worth knowing down to the family of Charles the First and the Duke of Gloucester. They are intermarried with all the old Dutch families of New York.

Coming down to some of the money magnates who were in the swim fifty years ago, we find that John Jacob Astor was then rated at \$14,000,000. A contemporary writer states that "fifty years before he had come a poor emigrant among a herd of steerage passengers in a ship commanded by the venerable Capt. John Jacob Astor. The steerage passengers became a millionaire, while the captain descended to the place of superintendent of Salter's Dock Harbor." There were many New Yorkers living at that time who remembered Astor when he worked in his cellar in Pearl street, packing and repacking his pelts and drying them for shipment.

Stephen Whitney, of the family who furnished the inventor of the cotton gin, was reckoned as the next richest man, \$10,000,000, standing as his credit.

James Lenox, who was the son of Robert Lenox, was the British consul in the Jersey prison ship in the days of the revolution, and there laid the foundation of the fortune, a part of which has been expended in the Lenox library, now a pride of the metropolis.

Peter Lorillard had to his credit \$2,500,000 and carried on the tobacco business as the descendants do today.

Among the single millionaires of the time—and they were few in number—was W. B. Astor, the eldest son of old John Jacob, and, like his father, piling up cartloads of deeds and mortgages.

Another man with a million was Jonathan Hunt, who, beginning as a small apple peddler in Troy, before he was 40, by some mysterious operation in Mobile, became possessed of his fortune.

Herman Thorne, one of the fast men of his time, was descended through Long Island Quakers from the purser of a British man-of-war who had managed to feather his nest.

James Desbrosses was the descendant of a family of French Huguenots who came here before the revolution, one brother becoming a confectioner and two others milliners. He was looked up to as the happy owner of \$600,000. He inherited a good deal of real estate. Henry Parish was good for \$700,000; Thomas Leggett for about \$300,000. John Mason had been a first rate tailor. His eldest daughter married the son of a cooper, and his son John married one of the actresses of the Park theatre. They gloried in fact that they were tradesmen.

Even half millionaires were then reckoned as entitled to the highest consideration as rich men. Of these were A. M. Fitch, Jr., Thomas Gardner, William Howard Howard, John Johnston, John D. Wendell and Elisha Riggs. The F. Gelhard of those days was a plodding German who set an example to his posterity to make and save. Abram Blinger was another economical Dutchman who spent his life as a grocer and put his profits into real estate.

Henry Brewster was the son of a woman who used to tell her husband that she was poor, and asked to her his fortune of \$400,000. Afterwards he married a wealthy southern lady.

The Irvings, Judge John T. Washington, the author; William, Ebenezer and Peter, were the sons of an industrious shoemaker in William street. The first named left his widow the comfortable sum of \$150,000.

Moses Taylor was a grocer. James I. Van Allen, a shrewd old Dutchman, was a dry goods merchant, and Abraham Van Nest, another Dutchman, was a saddler. Cornelius Vanderbilt at this time was rated at \$250,000. Nearly all of the persons above mentioned sprang from the loins of the common people and earned their living instead of inheriting it. They moved in the best New York society that regarded wealth as its standard, and by their judicious investments in Manhattan they have made their descendants even wealthier than a pedigree of our "best society."

F. G. DE POSTER.

EX-EMPRESS EUGENIE.

A Remarkable Incident in Her Eventful Career.

(Special Correspondence.)

New York, April 15.—From a letter written by a former maid of honor to the ex-Empress Eugenie, we learn that that unfortunate lady is in a very feeble state of health, and one which gives rise to the greatest anxiety on the part of her friends. An extract from the letter says:

"I am deeply grieved to tell you, and I know you will be grieved to hear, that our beloved empress shows great physical weakness, and we fear the worst, as the attacks of muscular rheumatism affect the action of her heart. Alas! how could it be otherwise when she has had so many sorrows? She bears her suffering like a martyr and never loses her sweet gentleness, but we who love her can see that she is falling fast, though we do not admit it. We are anxious and we fear the worst. The empress is in a very feeble state of health, and one which gives rise to the greatest anxiety on the part of her friends. An extract from the letter says:

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